

Inspection of Stoke Damerel Community College

Somerset Place, Stoke, Plymouth, Devon PL3 4BD

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 February 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders expect much of pupils. These expectations have risen considerably in the recent past. Leaders insist on an orderly atmosphere continuously. They want the best for pupils academically and holistically. Many pupils recognise this. They know that staff care for them. Pupils say they feel, and are, safe.

Leaders have introduced a behaviour policy which demands very high standards. Some pupils find the expectations hard. Some parents are, similarly, concerned that the policy is overbearing. However, staff apply the policy well and like it. Lessons are quiet and purposeful. Pupils recognise that disruptions are rare, and it is easier to learn. Inspectors saw this themselves.

Pupils say bullying can happen and, mostly, staff deal with it swiftly. However, they report that some pupils use homophobic terms without realising it is hurtful. Leaders know this. They are already adapting the curriculum to tackle this and rightly recognise it is a priority.

Pupils embrace the opportunities to enrich their understanding of the world through learning and extracurricular opportunities. For example, pupils enhance their knowledge through school performances, art and through useful links to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders strive to help pupils achieve their potential. They have constructed a well-designed curriculum that is broad and balanced. They have focused on ensuring that the core elements of the curriculum are more effective than it was when the school was last inspected. Consequently, staff deliver the curriculum successfully in English, mathematics and science, including in the sixth form. There are other strengths in the curriculum, including in the performing arts and computing. Pupils do well in these subjects. However, leaders recognise that there are other parts of the curriculum that are not implemented as consistently. Where this is the case, the curriculum is not sequenced adequately, and pupils' learning is less secure.

Governors, including trustees and members of the governing body, share leaders' ambition. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have put in place useful and considered processes to hold leaders to account and check what leaders tell them. Governors have helped leaders identify the requirements for improvement accurately. Leaders act swiftly and appropriately to tackle areas that could be better. For example, pupils' attendance overall is improving and suspensions reducing. Leaders recognise that entries to the English Baccalaureate should be higher. Nevertheless, their aspiration for pupils is high. Leaders have considered plans to address this as the curriculum improves further.

Subject leaders are supported to improve teaching and learning. For example, trust leaders provide useful and timely challenge to ensure that improvements to the curriculum and the quality of teaching make a difference, including in the sixth form. Systematic approaches to teaching have helped pupils know what to expect, and, as a result, they learn the intended curriculum more thoroughly. Teachers and leaders use assessment effectively in order to check what pupils are learning. Leaders know that greater consistency will allow pupils to learn with greater depth in the future.

Pupils' reading is a priority. Pupils benefit from a range of strategies to help them to read more widely. For example, leaders have focused on extending the words that pupils know and use. Pupils who struggle to read access a focused reading programme. This helps them read with greater independence and fluency.

Careers advice is woven carefully into the curriculum from Year 7. Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from advice that is sequenced logically, including for those who continue into the sixth form. As pupils get older, the advice and support they get is more specific.

Leaders responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are effective. They work with teachers to plan learning activities that suit the whole range of pupils' needs. SEND pupils learn the same curriculum alongside their peers. SEND pupils rightly believe in the support they receive because teachers and support staff know them as individuals. Teaching enables most pupils with SEND to achieve according to their potential. However, occasionally, teachers require further support to ensure that they adapt their teaching to meet the specific needs of individuals.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding is shared between skilled leaders. They ensure that those who work at the school prioritise pupils' safety and well-being. There are systems for identifying and recording concerns that are followed diligently by staff. Leaders have established strong relationships with pupils, parents and other agencies. Consequently, leaders make sure that pupils get the support they need in a timely fashion.

The curriculum helps pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. Arrangements for pastoral support are effective and understood. Safer recruitment practice meets statutory expectations. Leaders, including governors, check that their arrangements work. Consequently, where these arrangements could be even better, action is taken.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Although improving, the curriculum is not implemented as effectively in some subjects. This means pupils' learning is less secure in some subjects of the

curriculum than others. Leaders need to ensure that the implementation of the curriculum is more consistent in every subject.

- Pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders have established a useful and wide-ranging personal development curriculum. However, occasionally, pupils use some homophobic terms in a normalised way. Leaders need to ensure that the personal development curriculum continues to adapt to the challenges of the school community so that the casual use of homophobic language is stopped.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	136626
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10211719
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1300
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	153
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anne Spackman
Principal	Anita Frier
Website	http://www.sdcc.net
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The academy joined Greenshaw Learning Trust in January 2021.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers and two that are unregistered.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection of the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

- Inspectors met with senior and subject leaders, a group of staff and various groups of pupils. Discussions took place with the chief executive officer of the trust, the director of secondary education, the special educational needs coordinator and the leader for 16 to 19 study programmes. Inspectors met with representatives from the governing body and board of trustees, including the chairs and vice-chairs of each. Inspectors discussed leaders' evaluations, priorities for improvement, systems for monitoring and accountability and the curriculum.
- Inspectors did deep dives into four subjects: English, mathematics, geography and science. Inspectors met with senior and subject leaders, teachers and pupils. Inspectors visited lessons, scrutinised pupils' work and talked to pupils. Inspectors reviewed some subject planning and spoke to leaders about other subjects.
- Inspectors analysed 51 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey and the free-text responses. They scrutinised 43 responses to the survey for staff. They reviewed the school's parents' and pupils' surveys, including feedback provided to leaders during the pandemic.
- Inspectors analysed school documentation, including leaders' evaluations and plans for improvement and paperwork relating to the work of governors and the trust. Inspectors scrutinised a range of policies and procedures, including those that relate to the curriculum.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by meeting with the designated and deputy designated safeguarding leads, reviewing safer recruitment processes and speaking to staff and pupils. School policies, governance arrangements, records of concern and links to other agencies were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Matthew Barnes, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rachel Hesketh	Her Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Collins	Ofsted Inspector
David New	Ofsted Inspector
Iain Freeland	Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022